APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY
2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Wayne State University

Application ID: 13AC147970

Program Name: AmeriCorps Urban Safety Program

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant states the two current target areas were selected based on access to a police force and the ability to target hot spots and reduce crime. Both are relevant and reasonable selection criteria's.

(+) The applicant provided compelling evidence that the needs for these services exist within the community. For instance, Forbes magazine's research stated that Detroit is the most dangerous city in the Nation. The 2012 American Community Survey data states there are 107,000 vacant properties; and local crime statistics including assaults and property crimes support the need for this program.

(+) The applicant included information from the 2010 U.S. Census reporting household income and neighborhood surveys of the targeted communities, providing evidence that the communities are economically disadvantaged as required by CNCS guidelines.

(+) Members will come from the targeted community, meaning people who live in the targeted community and college students. This inclusion strengthens the program and establishes a partnership within the community.

(+) With AmeriCorps members, the applicant will be able to restart resources that are dormant. Those include helping police and security identify crime hot spots.

(+) The Members will focus on real-time crime analysis and community improvements that were unsuccessful due to the lack of resources. The Members will organize block clubs, mobilize volunteers, perform property cleanup, and vacant building board ups.

(+) The applicant provides a compelling case that the AmeriCorps members will expand activities to reduce crime in the identified targeted communities. In particular, the 32 additional Members are a significant addition to its manpower to engage in crime prevention services. The AmeriCorps members uniquely fit the bill because they are familiar with the community.

(+) Using evidence-based research, the applicant has found that when people isolate themselves and have a fear of crime, their social networks break down, thus increasing the opportunity for crime.

(+) The overall change expected at the end of the grant cycle is a 5%-10% annual crime reduction in target geographical areas, reduction in crime hot spots, community mobilization, and improved neighborhood safety. These expected changes reflect assumptions consistent with the theory of change that they have provided to achieve expectations.

(+) The applicant relates that it expects a 5-10% reduction in crime annually in each of the five target areas, an admirable goal based on its stated crime reduction statistics from 2008 to 2012.

(+) The applicant gives a comprehensive description of how impact will be measured both on a short-term and a long-term basis; for instance, long-term impact will be measured by the reduction in crime and reduction in victimization rates in the targeted areas, which are workable and highly useful measures.

(+) The applicant carefully and fully describes how its performance measures were determined including constructing a detailed logic model to derive outputs and outcomes.

(+) Performance targets were determined based on past evaluations utilizing standard evaluation tools such as asset mapping and needs assessments. The applicant differentiates between outputs and outcomes. Community mobilization efforts such as block clubs and tenant groups were identified as outputs. Crime reduction reports and measures of reduced victimization were identified as outcomes.

(-) The applicant references the theory of change framework and provides a website address but this information regarding Member activities is vague and does not help in evaluating their theory of change.

(-) The applicant proposes to utilize interventions that engage in evidence-based research. They propose to utilize the Theory of Change framework to link members with community needs. Although this is stated there is a lack of a description of the framework itself.

(-) The applicant states that they plan to add three additional communities to the project although they do not describe the criteria for deciding which communities to add.

(-) The applicant plans to expand its current program into three additional areas to be chosen through a joint process, which is not described and therefore cannot be assessed for need in these areas.